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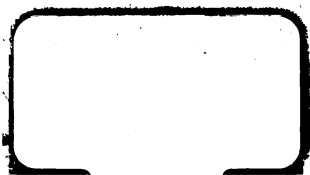
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Tewkesbury Ch.
- West end.

John Cole

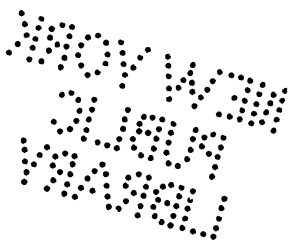
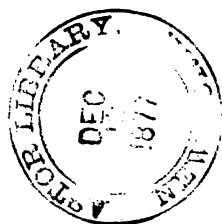
THE
ABB EY C H U R C H
OF
TEWKESBURY:

WITH A
Description of its Plan and Architectural Peculiarities.

BY
John Lower
J. L. PETIT, M.A. *S.S.A.*

CHELTHENHAM:
PUBLISHED BY HENRY DAVIES;
J. H. PARKER, OXFORD AND LONDON;
AND
J. BENNETT, TEWKESBURY.

1848. ₃



PREFACE.

It will readily be perceived that the following pages, forming the substance of a paper read before the Cheltenham Literary and Philosophical Institution, are not intended to supersede the more careful and valuable descriptions furnished by the local antiquary. They do not profess to enter into an historical account of the building, or, indeed, to do more than point out its general character, as compared with others of the same class. Which of these methods of treatment may be the most interesting or instructive, it is needless to discuss; suffice it to say, I have chosen that for which my own pursuits have the best qualified me.

I have purposely abstained from every topic bordering upon religious controversy: and I have done so the more willingly, as I am convinced that the introduction of this element in discussions on church architecture is not only unnecessary, but injurious to art,

both by enforcing a false standard of taste, and by casting suspicion upon those who take pleasure in studying the venerable works bequeathed to us by the piety of our ancestors, or who express anxiety that our ecclesiastical structures should retain that air of grandeur and solemnity which so well befits them.

It seems to have been a general and natural impression, through all ages, by whatever errors religion may have been disfigured, that buildings set apart for the purposes of Divine worship, ought, if possible, to be distinguished by a superiority of design, from our ordinary dwellings; that they should, moreover, be preserved with care, and regarded with a certain degree of veneration. But if this assumes the form of a superstitious reverence, which we are not justified in bestowing upon any material object, it cannot be wondered that persons, of religious feeling, are to be found who strive to counteract the prevailing impression, and denounce the study of church architecture 'as a dangerous snare, instead of encouraging it as a pursuit conducive to expansion of intellect and the exercise of devotional feeling. When, for instance, we hear it asserted, that a particular style, or a particular arrange-

ment, and no other, is proper for a Christian place of worship, and this not on considerations of mechanical excellence, or convenience, or the encouragement of a frame of mind suitable to devotion, but as though it had a claim resting upon undoubted inspiration ; or because the designer intended to symbolize certain Divine truths or doctrines, we cannot help taking alarm, and dreading some innate tendency to superstition in our pursuit.

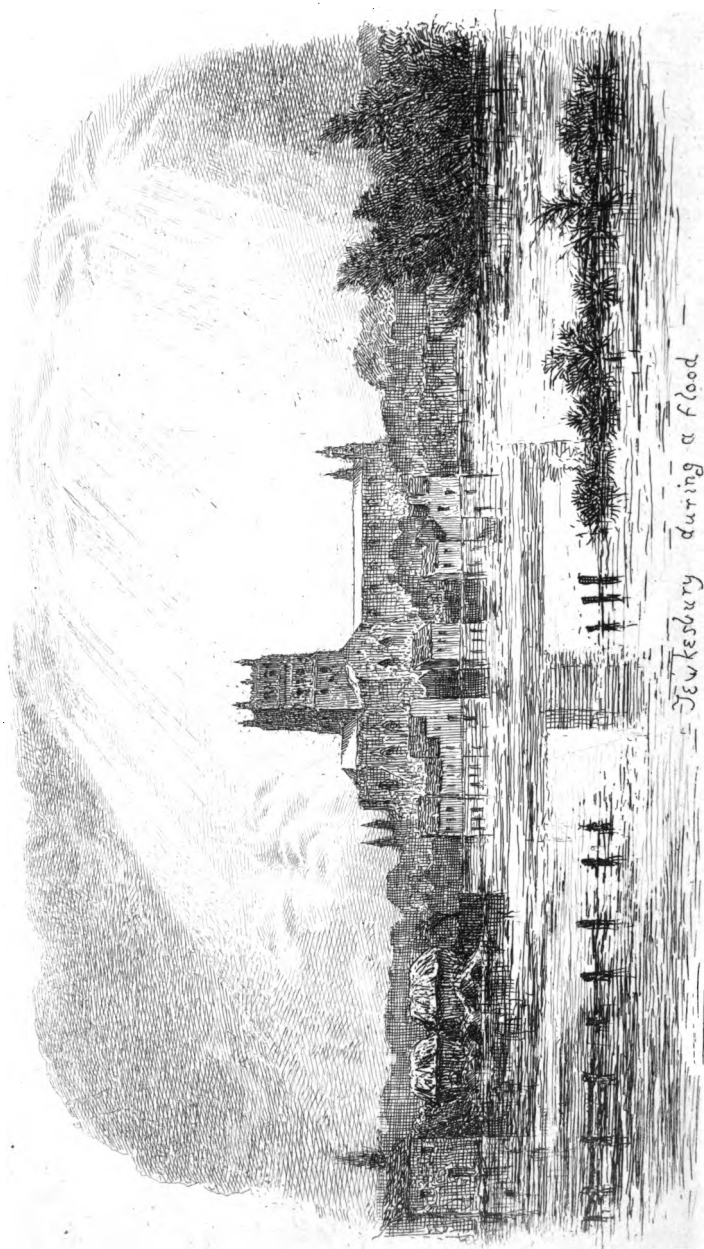
Again, if the architect is led to look upon symbolism otherwise than as a secondary element in works of mediæval art, he will be apt to overlook the real principles of excellence; such as beauty of proportion and mechanical contrivance. It is, indeed, necessary that he should be conversant with symbols, as the knowledge of them may save him from many gross errors when he imitates ancient examples ; but by attaching too great an importance to them, he will, in his search for abstruse meanings, run the risk of neglecting the plain and obvious lessons, which even the simplest of our old churches is calculated to teach him.

I am unwilling, however, to suppose it impossible to avoid superstitious notions, without checking those

feelings of reverence and devotion which the contemplation of an ancient church naturally excites. And there can be no better means of ensuring this result than by making ourselves thoroughly acquainted with the subject, and addressing ourselves to its study in a spirit of historical research, and fair and candid criticism.

J. L. P.





Tewkesbury during a flood

TEWKESBURY CHURCH.

IN the area of a circle, about twenty-five miles in diameter, comprising a district scarcely to be surpassed, either in the richness of its soil or the beauty of its scenery, are at least six religious foundations, which their existing architectural remains prove to have been of great magnitude and importance. Of these the cathedrals of Worcester and Gloucester are situated on the banks of the Severn; the abbeys of Evesham and Pershore on its celebrated tributary, the Avon; the abbey of Tewkesbury, at the confluence of the two rivers; and that of Malvern, on the eastern slope of the range of that name, commanding the whole district. At Worcester, Gloucester, Tewkesbury, and Malvern, the churches remain complete, and comparatively uninjured in their architectural character, and also some portion of the buildings connected with them. At Pershore the choir, one of the transepts, and the central tower, remain, and are kept in repair, as the parish church. At Evesham, though the conventual church is entirely destroyed, the singularly beautiful gate-tower, erected but a short time previously to the dissolution of the monastery, is preserved entire, and, with the two parish churches, both standing in the same cemetery, forms one of the most striking groups that ecclesiastical architecture has produced. All these structures are deserving of a careful examination, as displaying specimens of excellence in every one of the mediæval styles, from the Norman of the twelfth, or even the eleventh century, to

the perpendicular of the sixteenth; for the tower of Evesham is the production of the first half of that century.

From these we will at present select Tewkesbury Abbey Church as the subject of a notice; premising that the reader must not expect to find in the following pages that minute description of the fabric, or history of the monastery, which falls within the province of the local antiquary, but simply such remarks upon its architectural character, and inferences as to date, as might occur to an observer who has given his attention to similar buildings.

The style which prevailed at the period to which the oldest and most considerable part of this edifice belongs, though it may not have attained the graceful elegance and variety of succeeding styles, yet abounds with interest; both as possessing in itself much grandeur, and as exhibiting the germs of future development. The study of it leads us into a wide field, from the multitude of examples which it presents to us: cathedrals and churches of the first magnitude, as well as chapels of the simplest description, are found, which may be referred to it; and like the Gothic buildings of a later age, they exhibit both the general characteristics of style, and also the peculiar characteristics of locality.

The church under consideration is the more valuable to the student, inasmuch as its general plan and outline was preserved when a part of it was rebuilt in an advanced style of pointed architecture; and it thus, at the same time, furnishes the contrast of two very different styles in close juxtaposition to each other, while it retains the general aspect and character of a pure Norman church.

The monastery was founded in the year 715; but no part of the present building can claim a higher antiquity than the time of Henry I., when Robert Fitzhamon, in the year 1102, new built the church, and endowed the abbey with many possessions. The Norman work, for the most part, is such as may very well be assigned to this period, or to such time beyond it as might be necessary for the completion of the fabric according to the original plan. But whether this plan was strictly adhered to, or a change of design took place during the prevalence of the Norman style, may afford us a subject for conjecture.

The church consists of a choir, terminating in a polygonal apse, (part of a nearly regular octagon) and surrounded by an aisle, from which branch out a number of chapels, also polygonal in their form. The Lady Chapel, which occupied the east end, is destroyed. A central tower, with north and south transepts. Neither of these have aisles, but the southern one has a semicircular apse attached to its east side: a similar apse probably belonged to the eastern side of the north transept, but is destroyed. Contiguous to this transept is a building which is generally considered to have been the Chapter House; of which we will presently give a more particular description. Westward of the tower is the nave, with a north and south aisle, from which it is divided by ranges of massive cylindrical columns with round arches. To the northern aisle is attached a spacious porch, and on the south side are remains of cloisters, which were entered from the church by an enriched door, now blocked up. The west end presents an enormous round arch, recessed in six orders, supported by shafts, and flanked by two beautiful turrets with spires.

The principal dimensions of the church are as follow :

	FT.	IN.
External length of the nave from the western angle of the aisle to the transept	174	3
Projection of the impost of the great western arch ...	7	7
Thickness of the wall which fills up this arch, and in which the present west door stands	6	10
Consequently the internal length of the nave, from the western wall to a point corresponding with the exterior of the west wall of the transepts, will be	159	10
Width of the tower externally, from east to west, taken at the height of the nave parapet	46	9
External length of the choir, taken from the east wall of the tower, and not including the eastern aisle, is about ...	60	0
Consequently the whole length of the church, taken at the height of the choir parapet, will be about	281	0
From the spot where the communion table stands to the wall of the Lady Chapel	24	4
Deducting about seven feet for the distance of the communion table from the point corresponding with the external face of the eastern wall, we shall have for the total length of the interior, from the west wall of the nave to the wall of the Lady Chapel, about	293	11

But as the western walls of the nave aisles correspond with the front of the large arch and not with the wall of the nave, and as the apsidal chapels extend a little to the eastward of the wall of the Lady Chapel, the total length of the interior, reckoning along one of the aisles, will be a few feet more.

	FT.	IN.
Width of the nave and aisles internally	71	0
Distance between two opposite piers of nave	33	1
Distance between two adjacent piers	12	0
The westernmost arch of the nave is narrower— <i>viz.</i>	9	2
Interior length of the cross aisle, from north to south, about	124	0
Width of the large western arch between the shafts of the innermost order	19	5
Do. between the outermost shafts	31	11
Total width of the west front externally, about	79	0

The side walls of the aisles are, therefore, about four feet in thickness; the walls, which are of a greater height, being proportionably thicker.

					FT.	IN.
Height of the battlement of the tower above the parapet of						
the transept	...	...	...	...	74	0
Height of the parapet of the transept above the ground					58	6
Height of a pier of the nave, including the base and cap					80	0
Height between base and cap	...	...	...	...	26	10

The height of the vaulting would probably not differ much from that of the parapet of the nave; it must be under sixty feet.

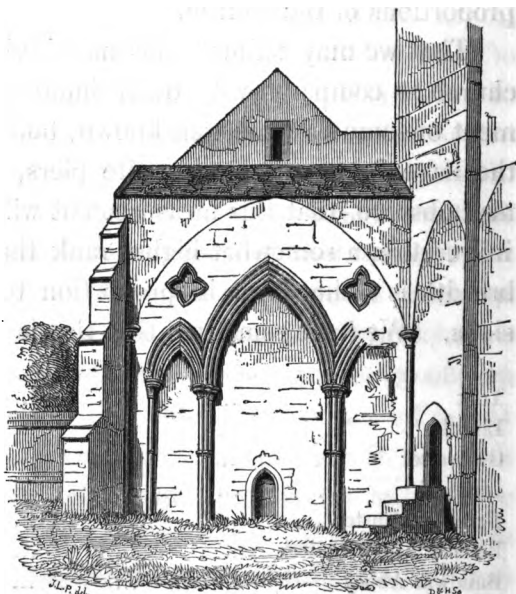
The above measurements might be taken with greater accuracy by the professional architect; but as we have given them, they will be found sufficiently correct to enable the reader to form an idea of the size and general proportions of the church.

That we may estimate the magnitude of Tewkesbury church as compared with other buildings, the measurement of some that are well known, taking the breadth of the nave between two opposite piers, is affixed; but I may observe, that this measurement will give the church in question a somewhat higher rank than its due, as its breadth is rather large in proportion to its other dimensions. We have remarked that this is 33ft. 1in.

					FT.	IN.
York	...	...	...	...	45	10
Lincoln	...	...	...	...	38	10
Gloucester	...	...	...	...	34	0
Lichfield	...	...	...	...	27	2
Beverley Minster	...	...	...	...	27	4½
Romsey Abbey Church	...	...	...	...	30	1
Buildwas Abbey	...	...	...	...	26	8½

There are not many remains of the monastic buildings, besides a fine gateway, near the west end of the church; this might be referred to the end of the fourteenth century. Its position, as well as the appearance

of the wall of the south aisle, leads us to infer that the monastery occupied the ground on the south side of the church, which consequently exhibits less ornament than the north side, a peculiarity that may be noticed at Romsey, in Hampshire, and in many other instances. The cloisters we know to have been on the south side, where some very beautiful remains of them still exist: they seem to have had a fan roof, like those at Gloucester, if we can judge from the springs of the vaultings. It is usual in cathedrals and monastic buildings, for the Chapter House to open into the cloister, as at Salisbury, where it is on the south side of the church, and at Lincoln, where it is on the north. Wells cathedral, however, has the Chapter House on the north side, and the cloisters on the south; and this was the case in the example before us, if the building now in use as a school, was originally (as is generally supposed) the Chapter House: this consists of an oblong rectangular room parallel with the east wall of the



Front of Chapter House.

transept; about forty-five feet in length from north to south, and twenty-four in breadth, from east to west. A fine segmental pointed arch, with early English mould-

ings and general features, crosses it from east to west, and a wall, apparently of modern date, cuts off a portion adjoining the aisle of the choir. The exterior west front of this building presents a large pointed arch, flanked by two smaller ones, on shafts. But this was evidently an interior wall of a room wider than the corresponding bay of the Chapter House, by a space about equal to the two small arches; the arch-line of its principal vault comprising all three arches, and the arch-lines of the vaulting cells of the roof being visible on the transept front. There are also indications of a large entrance-arch into the transept. The vault of the room now called the Chapter House is not much wider than the inner of the three arches which we see on its present front. With some few later insertions, as the mullions of windows, this building exhibits a beautiful specimen of early English, a style which does not abound in the neighbouring parts of Gloucestershire, though it is seen in perfection in the choirs of Worcester cathedral and Pershore abbey.

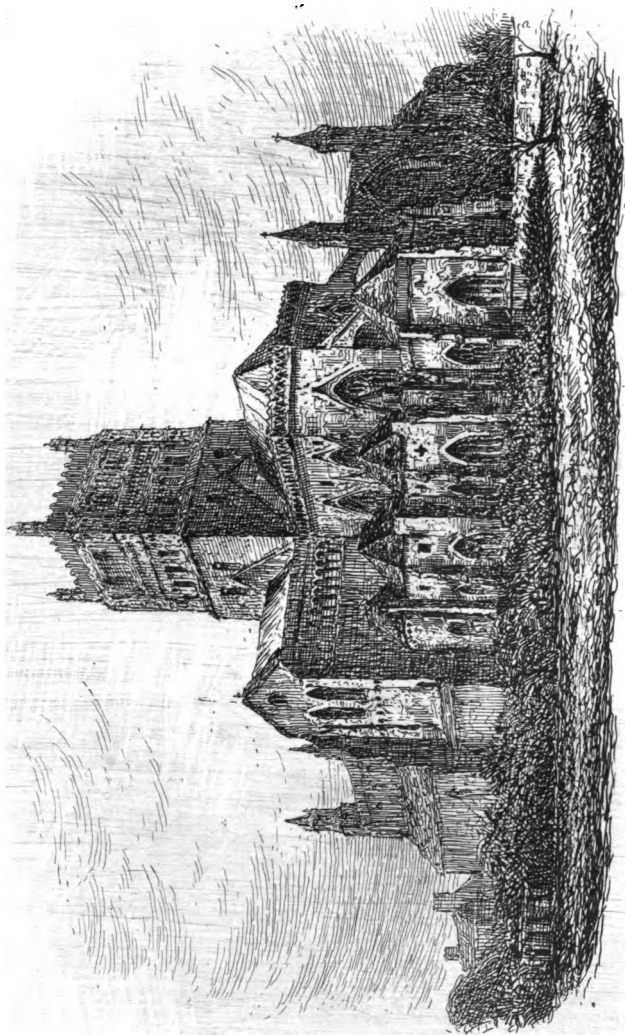
A tower stood, within the memory of man, on the spot now occupied by a school, in front of the north transept, at the present boundary of the churchyard. It may have been connected with the church and Chapter House by a range of buildings. This brings what we may call the monastic territory in a sweep from the west end of the church, round the whole of the south side and east end, to the front of the north transept; in fact, including orchards, gardens, &c., it may have had the stream of the Swilgate for its boundary. A portion of old wall is to be seen close to the stream on the east side of the church, and there are some remains near the Avon, to the north-west of the church: this latter may

have been part of an outer wall, enclosing the churchyard and ground belonging to the monastery, though outside of the gateway leading into the conventual buildings.

However much an abbey church may have been enclosed by the buildings necessarily attached to it, care seems to have been taken that, at least in one point, a good general view should be obtained of it in some part of the close or precincts; and wherever these have not been encroached upon by modern houses, such a view is generally to be found. For instance, the south-west view of Gloucester cathedral; the same of Canterbury; the whole range of the north side and the west front of Salisbury, a structure whose beautiful proportions demanded a clear and unbroken view of the whole from a moderate distance; the west fronts of Lincoln, Peterborough, Wells, and Lichfield; and the north side of Durham. Thus the north-west view of Tewkesbury church* must always have been a very satisfactory one. It is likely also that a small open space eastward of the buildings attached to the south transept, and perhaps used as the monastic burial ground (as it appears that a coffin has been found at or near the spot to which we refer) may have afforded a view of the southern range of chapels, surmounted by the choir and tower, and forming a very striking group. Indeed it is not to be supposed that the architects who so evidently studied the principles which ensured their structures a grand and impressive effect, were careless in providing that there should be, at least, some one point from which it might be duly estimated.

The general aspect of the church is, as we have already remarked, not very materially different from that

* A drawing of this has been published by Mr. Rowe.



Tewkesbury Ch. S. E.



which it bore on its completion as a Norman structure. In its masonry we may conceive the outline to have been essentially the same, though the roof was evidently of a higher pitch, and the tower was crowned with a wooden spire, or at least a roof far higher than the present parapet. All the piers of the nave and choir are either wholly, or at their base, original; so are the walls of the nave-aisles, and the transepts. From the circumstance of the choir having Norman piers, it is clear that it was, as at present, surrounded by an aisle; consequently the only material point of difference between the plan, as it now exists, and the original, is such as may arise from any alteration in the size of the choir-aisle, and the addition of the chapels which are attached to it.

The choir is terminated by an apse. This in Norman buildings was most frequently round, as it is at Peterborough. But from the width of the pier arches it would seem that the apse of Tewkesbury church was polygonal (as we see it now) from the first. It is evident that if a wall of a curved plan be supported by an arch, the lines of this arch will have a double curvature, or not lie in the same vertical plane. And this, when the arch is of sufficient size to render it apparent to the eye, is not pleasing; as will be acknowledged by any one who has noticed its effect in the circular part of the Temple church in London. Where the arch is small in comparison with the bow of the apse, the double curvature is not perceptible, and in thick walls it may be considerably softened by increasing or lessening the curve of the plane at certain points, but this would have been difficult in the case before us. Gloucester has some apsidal chapels attached to it, that exhibit, at least externally, a polygonal plan, which is by no means uncommon in con-

tinental buildings of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. As architecture advanced, it became universal.

A semicircular apse branches from the east side of the south transept; in this the curve of the wall is preserved both externally and internally, though it may have been somewhat modified at the insertion of a window of the fourteenth century. No doubt there was a corresponding apse in the north transept; which was removed when the Chapter House was added in the thirteenth century. Apses in this position, evidently built for the introduction of altars, seem to have been common in Norman and early English buildings; and in some cases where the apse itself is destroyed, its position is indicated by a large arch in the wall, as in the north transept. We see an arch of this kind in Pershore church, which it would be difficult to account for on any other supposition. The principal south transept of Worcester cathedral has an arch in the east side, opening into an early English chapel, under which is a Norman crypt; from which we may infer that in this case a chapel of some length, instead of a mere semicircular projection, was attached to the transept. There are beautiful specimens of the transept-apse at Romsey, in Hampshire, where the termination of the choir-aisles, internally, is also semicircular, though externally, as well as the choir itself, they are flat.

The present range of chapels round the choir at Tewkesbury, if it does not exactly occupy the original Norman plan, perhaps not altogether badly represents it. We see in the plans of Gloucester cathedral (the original design of which was, in many respects, similar to that under our consideration) that besides the apses attached to the transepts, there was one branching off diagonally

on each side of the choir-aisle, and another at the extreme east end. If a similar arrangement existed at Tewkesbury, it would naturally suggest to the later architect that beautiful group of decorated chapels, which, with the lady-chapel at the east end, must have exhibited, externally, as well as internally, an effect not to be surpassed by any similar combination in England. In their present state, with their deep recesses, forming the most striking contrasts of light and shade, their rich assemblage of monumental remains, their fine vaultings, and the occasional glimpses they afford of the magnificent painted windows which surround the choir, I know of few architectural compositions equal in solemnity to the eastern aisles of Tewkesbury church.

The weather-mouldings of the central tower shew that the ridge of the roof has been much lowered, but they also shew that the height of the clerestory wall cannot have been materially altered: the windows, both in the upper range of the nave and the fronts of the transepts, appear to occupy their original position, though in size and style they have been changed: the tower has modern battlements and pinnacles. We are informed that there was a wooden spire erected by Robert Earl of Gloucester (this would be in the latter part of the twelfth century) and blown down in 1559. In Normandy, where the original masonry of the tower seems more often to be preserved entire than it is in England, the tower is generally covered by a four-sided pyramidal roof, forming eaves over the wall, and consequently without a parapet, or else by a wooden spire set on in a similar manner. With the exception of the parapet and pinnacles, the tower of Tewkesbury church is of pure Norman throughout; at once massive and lofty in its

general proportions, while the slightly tapering form given it by the different width of its stages, divest it of any appearance of heaviness which might be displeasing.

I may here observe that the predominant central tower, in large buildings, is peculiarly an English feature. There are, without doubt, many fine continental examples; but in churches of cathedral size and dignity, these form the exception rather than the rule. The finest steeples, as at Antwerp, Strasburgh, and Freyburg, usually belong to the west front; there is either no central tower at all, or only a very subordinate one, as the octagon in the design for Cologne cathedral, which is very much smaller, both in height and massiveness, than the western steeples. Sometimes a thin wooden spire crowns the ridge of the roof, as at Dijon. Now, in England, few cathedrals or large conventual churches are without a central tower of sufficient importance to form the characteristic feature of the building; Westminster abbey, which is without it, has a decidedly foreign appearance in many respects. The central towers of Gloucester, York, Canterbury, Lincoln; and the spires of Salisbury and Chichester, are not equalled by any towers occupying the same position in continental churches. In Normandy the central tower is not unfrequent, but is often out-topped by western towers, as in the abbey of St. Stephen, at Caen.

It is not difficult to arrive at the reason of this distinction. The plan of the larger continental churches generally comprised two aisles on each side of the nave, and thus, almost of necessity, required either a front which should form a screen, or a western transept, or two enormous towers. But in England there is seldom more than one aisle on each side, and in this case a

simple front, shewing the composition without disguise, as at Winchester, Gloucester, and Worcester, forms a beautiful pyramidical outline; or if towers be added at the end of the aisles, these need not be of a massiveness exceeding or equalling that in the centre. In continental specimens also the great height of the nave, and the slenderness of the piers, might render a massive central tower inconvenient.

The grouping of towers evidently occupied much attention at and about the time when the Norman architecture prevailed; and I am not clear that we shall find any arrangement of a later date which may not also be found in buildings of that period; although some modes of grouping that belonged to it appear to have dropped during the succeeding eras of Gothic architecture. Dr. Whewell, in his interesting work on the German churches of the Romanesque and transition style, has shewn the general principle on which their architects arranged their towers. The example he has selected as a frontispiece to his book (the Abbey Church of Laach) is perhaps the best calculated to illustrate his observations. This church consists of a nave, with aisles, terminated at each end by a transept, beyond the easternmost of which is a short apsidal chancel; the westernmost has also a projecting semicircular apse, corresponding with the line of the nave. There are, consequently, two intersections, each of which has its own central tower: that nearest the west end is square and lofty, tapering in two stages; and at each end of the transept is a massive round turret, rising considerably above the roof of the church: attached to the west side of this transept is a low cloister. The central tower nearest the east end is a low octagon with a pyramidical roof; and at the angles be-

tween the transept and chancel are two square turrets, of a greater height than the octagon. Thus we have two groups, each consisting of three towers, an arrangement which we see carried out altogether in some churches, and evidently considered in the design of others. At Mainz each end of the nave has its group of a central tower and subordinate turrets; a little varied in arrangement from those of Laach, but evidently on a similar principle. At Worms there is no western transept, but an octagon with an apse projecting from it, and two lofty circular turrets engaged, in its north and south walls. The eastern octagon has a transept, and two lofty turrets flank the chancel or choir. In this instance, therefore, are the two triple groups, one of them consisting of towers detached from each other, and one, of towers connected together. The church of the Apostles at Cologne has two intersections, the eastern one having its central lantern and turrets in the angle between the transepts and chancel, while the other has no central tower, nor any turrets, but westward of it is a lofty square tower. It may be observed that in this, as in some other instances, the chancel turrets are detached from the central tower, on account of the latter being octagonal. At St. Martin's, in Cologne, the central tower is square, and fills up the whole area of the intersection, consequently the chancel turrets are not disconnected from it, but form lofty pinnacles at its angles. Such a combination in fact as this, and that I have mentioned as belonging to Worms, may have first suggested pinnacles to towers, which afterwards became so common an ornament, and of which Gloucester cathedral furnishes such magnificent specimens.

Another arrangement, still upon the principle of the

two groups, is that which comprises four towers, namely, two at each end. Andernach on the Rhine, and Arnstein on the Lahn, offer fine examples.

When the church had an eastern, but no western transept, the one group might consist simply of a pair of towers, the other, of a central tower with its subordinate turrets. The cathedral of Limburg on the Lahn (a little later in date and style than the buildings I have just named, but which may fairly be classed with them as to character) has an outline to which this arrangement gives great beauty and variety, and which harmonizes well with its picturesque site, on the summit of a steep rock, at the foot of which runs the river. The western front has two fine towers; the intersection, an octagon; and at the end of the north transept is a pair of lofty square turrets; a similar finish being evidently intended on the south side.

A single western tower and two lateral towers or turrets near the east end also forms a composition of which examples are to be found.

In Lombardy the central octagon is common, and instead of the two chancel turrets we often see only one large and lofty tower, used as a belfry, standing on the side of the chancel.

In England the western transept is not a common feature; nevertheless there are instances—Lincoln, as well as Peterborough, has a short western transept; but instead of a single tower at its intersection with the nave, it has one at its intersection with each of the aisles. In both cases the transept is much hidden and disguised by a later west front: but this adds to the variety of the group. At Lincoln the west front is flanked by large octagonal turrets with spires, which are, however, very

subordinate to the principal towers. But at Peterborough the grand early English front of three gables over their deep, lofty, and expansive arches, is flanked by square towers with spires; not indeed of great breadth, but sufficient in height to out-top all the other parts of the building. Behind those arches of the front which correspond with the aisles are more massive towers, one being still unfinished. The eastern group consists of a low central tower of later date, but most likely replacing one of the twelfth century; turrets at each angle of the transept fronts, and a turret on each side of the apse. These turrets, it is true, do not bear the same proportion to the towers as in the German examples I have quoted, but they give variety to the outline.

Professor Willis shews that Winchester cathedral had, or was intended to have, by the Norman architects, a magnificent combination of towers: two western ones, the traces of which have been found; the central one still existing; and two at the end of each transept (perhaps merely designed and never completed), not mere turrets, but large enough to comprise the aisles; thus giving seven in all. This arrangement, though in later styles, is still to be seen in Rouen cathedral.

At Canterbury each of the eastern transepts has, on its west side, a large square turret, with Norman details, of sufficient magnitude to have formed with any low central tower a very German looking group; and notwithstanding the size of the other towers they form a striking feature in the general outline.

Ely cathedral must have presented a noble group about the end of the twelfth century, and one perhaps of a more German character than any. A western transept, having a lofty tower at its intersection with the

nave, and flanked, at each angle of its front, with a massive and lofty turret, form one group; while a tower rose also from the eastern intersection. The grandeur of this composition is not destroyed by the designs of later architects; possibly it is increased. The latter tower is replaced by the present unique and beautiful octagon, of Decorated work, which comprises in its width both the nave and aisles, and harmonizes admirably with the western tower, to which additional height seems to have been given about the same time. The north limb of the western transept is destroyed, if indeed it has ever been completed.

The combination of a large central tower with smaller western ones corresponding to the aisles, which is exhibited in great perfection in several of our cathedrals, as York, Lichfield, and others, was evidently in favour during the period of Norman architecture. Southwell church, in Nottinghamshire, is a fine example of this arrangement; and in other churches, Gloucester cathedral for instance, we know that western towers have existed, though now destroyed.

Hereford cathedral had a single western tower at the end of the nave, as well as the central one over the transept. This combination is also seen in Wimborn minster, in Dorsetshire; but the western tower of that church is of a late date.

Exeter cathedral has two massive Norman towers forming transepts, instead of a single central one. Their effect is extremely fine.

I hope this long digression will not be considered out of place, in our notice of one of the finest specimens of the Norman tower which exists. The tower, or combination of towers, is generally the distinguishing exterior

mark or characteristic of a church; and it seems to have been first treated as a matter of importance, in this view, during the period of the Norman style.

Perhaps no subordinate western towers could have grouped better with the central tower of Tewkesbury, nor have formed a more harmonious finish to its magnificent front, than do the elegant turrets which flank the



The Turret.

great arch. They are unique in their design, and in their general proportion not inferior to the most elaborate pinnacles of the advanced Gothic. But though of evidently Norman date, it may be doubted whether they are a part of the original design. In the clerestory wall, above the aisle vaulting, about seventeen feet from the western wall of the building, is a rough mass of masonry, indicating that a wall about five feet in thickness, had been at least begun across the aisle.

Now this would be the proper position, and the probable thickness of the eastern wall to one of two western towers, and gives a fair reason for supposing that such were intended. Perhaps a change of architect may have involved a change of design; no uncommon circumstance. A remarkable instance of this occurs in the church of Wenlock, in Shropshire, which has a western tower with Norman belfry windows, from which we may infer that the whole tower is Norman. But on examining its interior, we find, on the western or inner face of its eastern wall, highly enriched work, disposed in such manner as clearly to form the western

front of a Norman church; so that the tower must have been added, to the utter exclusion of a beautiful and ornamented front, almost immediately on its completion; whether in consequence of some insecurity in the fabric, or a feeling of jealousy on the part of the new architect.

At Tewkesbury we might conjecture that either the architect who designed the western towers, or his successor, changed the plan, and employed the funds intended for their erection in giving greater height to the central tower, by adding the ornamented stages to the plain base, and finishing the west front with the present lighter turrets.

What this front may have been in its original state, is not easy to determine. A large pointed window and door now occupy the wall which fills up the grand arch. The former was inserted in the seventeenth century, in place of one that was blown down. From the tracery of the present window we may pronounce it to have been imitated, to the best of the architect's abilities, from a window of the early perpendicular style. But the Norman front must have been of a wholly different character. The arrangement giving the greatest effect to this noble arch, would probably be to leave it entirely open, and throwing back the west wall of the nave, to form a magnificent internal porch. But there do not appear sufficient indications to justify us in assuming that this was the actual arrangement; that the arch, however, was deeper than at present, appears from the masonry. The impost is composed of shafts, set in re-entering right angles, six altogether, according to the number of orders in the arch itself. The innermost shaft now touches the surface of the wall in which are the pointed door and window. But this surface exhibits a break of masonry

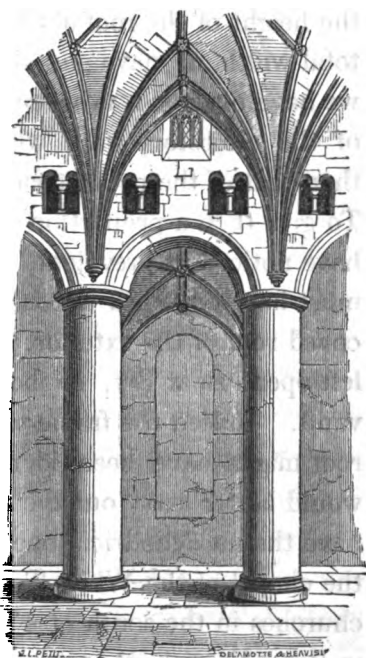
exactly corresponding with the salient angles of the impost, which leads us to conclude, either that the impost had another order, or else, which is more probable, that the section of the impost originally comprised a straight line at right angles with the face of the wall. As this wall is upwards of six feet in thickness, its interior face might have been the same that it is at present; for its diminution by one or even two feet would not have rendered it insecure.

Another circumstance to be remarked, is that there are no remains of a Norman door in the present wall. It is scarce likely that such a front as that before us should have been without an entrance; and yet, we generally find that, whatever insertions of a later style are made in a Norman building, the doorways are retained, unless the plan involves an entire reconstruction. In the very church, we are considering, not a single Norman window remains untouched, unless in the tower; while both the doorways of the north porch are in their original condition. From this we have reason to suspect that the whole of the west wall, within the great arch, must have been re-built entirely in a different position from that in which it formerly stood.

From the small number of unaltered Norman fronts of any magnitude still remaining, it is difficult to judge how the windows were originally arranged; the continental examples which we know lead us to suppose that they formed several tiers. The transepts appear each to have had no more than two windows in their front, standing on the same level.

The porch has an inner and outer door, both round-headed, and, like the western arch, consisting of several orders supported on shafts. The mouldings are few and

simple, and exhibit none of the enrichments peculiar to the style, which are often found in greater abundance in the small parish church than in the abbey or cathedral ; as if in the latter the grandeur of design superseded the necessity of elaborate workmanship. And this must be our feeling as we enter the nave, for nothing can be plainer than the work in every part where the original Norman building is left untouched. The piers are lofty massive cylinders, supporting semicircular arches of two orders, perfectly plain with the exception of a small moulding at the edge of the outer one. The vaulting and clerestory windows disguise the original work above the arches, which probably consisted of the present triforium range, *viz.* in each bay two couplets of narrow round arches, separated by a massive shaft; and the clerestory, which might have presented a row of small round-headed windows with large splays; a contrivance used in the early styles for the purpose of expanding and softening the body of light. There is no appearance of any shaft above the main pier, to divide the bays; and the triforium couplets seem at pretty equal distances from each other. There is only one clerestory window in each bay. As the principal roof of Norman buildings in England was seldom vaulted, though churches of the same date



Bay of Nave.

on the continent very frequently were so, we may suppose the nave was covered with a timber roof; either flat and boarded, as at Peterborough and St. Alban's, or an open frame-work of carpentry, as in Ely. That the latter roof was used is not improbable, if we may draw an inference from the measurements of the building. A very usual proportion, though by no means universal, is, that the height of the roof shall be equal, or nearly so, to the total width of nave and aisles. This latter dimension, we have observed, is seventy-one feet; while the height of the clerestory wall, which does not appear to be less than that of the present vaulting, is less than sixty feet. To give then a proportion at all approaching to that we have noticed as prevalent, the timber roof of the interior must have occupied a considerable part of the original coved roof of the exterior, which it might do, whether left open, as at Ely, or boarded into a plain cylindrical vault. Indeed the frame-work of the outer and inner roof might have been identical. No kind of vaulting would better carry out the idea of the present Norman nave than a cylindrical one of stone, such as we see in the chapel of the White Tower, in London, and in some churches in the south of France. But it is not common in large English churches. We may notice, however, that the roof of the porch is cylindrical.

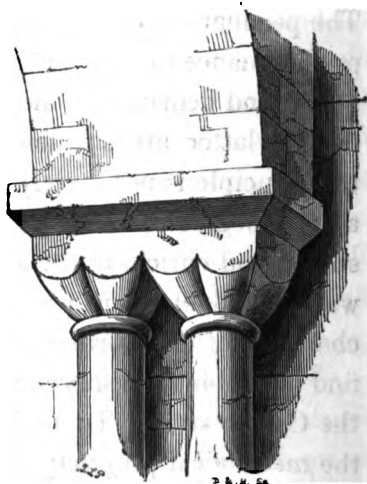
On comparing this nave with that of other Norman churches, we find that in its composition it is very similar to Gloucester cathedral, and very different from almost every other. Its peculiarity is the small size of the triforium. In most large Norman structures this feature is a very important one, though some few are altogether without it, as Kirkstall and Buildwas. But in general it bears a considerable proportion to the pier arches below.

Durham, Peterborough, Ely, Romsey, Southwell, Waltham, and other churches that might be named, offer fine examples. Each bay is entirely filled by a large arch, with its imposts, either plain, or divided into inferior arches by one or more shafts. At Ely the triforium stage takes nearly as much space in the height of the building as that of the pier-arches. Sometimes the triforium passage is of the same width as the aisle below, and is vaulted.

The principles which guided the architect in the buildings I have named, and that we are now noticing, were altogether different. Height was required. In one case this is given by a number of equal stages, divided from each other by horizontal string-courses; in the other, by giving great height to the principal stage. In the nave of Tewkesbury church there seems to have been no continuous horizontal line between the floor and the roof. The peculiar character of Gothic architecture, *viz.*, the predominance of the vertical line is more strongly suggested and demanded, though far from being developed, by this latter arrangement. And in the western arch the principle is not merely suggested, but carried out in a great degree by making the impost a cluster of small shafts, and enriching the several orders with mouldings: we cannot look at it without admitting the transitional character of the Norman style. But in the transepts we find a combination more in the spirit of the Roman than the Gothic style. To understand this we must consider the mechanical propriety which pervades the whole system of Gothic architecture. The part supported is made to appear lighter than that which supports it; for instance, if the pier is an octagonal one, the architrave of the arch

is apparently lightened by dividing it into two orders, which are chamfered off, thus giving it a greater number of faces, and these of smaller width, than the pier below. The consequence is, that although the wall in which the arch is placed may be considerably thicker than the pier itself, yet it seems light in comparison, just as the whole expanse of branches in a tree is evidently not disproportioned in weight to its simple and massive trunk. The choir of this church presents a good example; the piers are plain cylindrical ones, originally of Norman design, but adapted to the Decorated work by their capitals, while the architrave is enriched and lightened by a variety of deep and beautiful mouldings.

Now, in the combination alluded to, which occurs under the tower and in the transepts, the system is altogether reversed. The arch is a plain one of a single order, without moulding or chamfer, while the impost is divided into two shafts, under a wide capital. The supporting mass is thus made to appear lighter than that which it supports, an arrangement wholly consonant with the principles of classic architecture, in which as much heaviness as possible seems to be given to the parts supported, as entablatures, arches, &c. In fact both the construction of the transepts, (which is worth a careful ex-



Norman Capital.

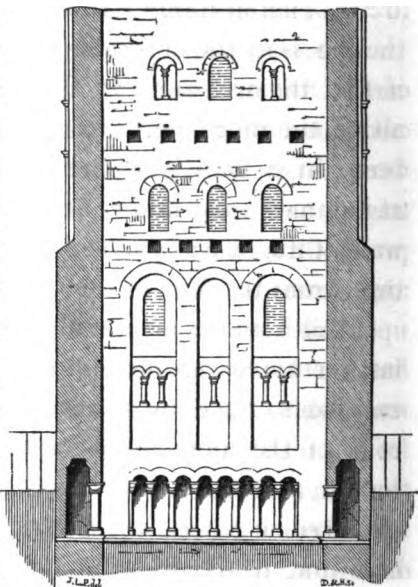
amination,) and the arches under the tower, exhibit in their original work little that might not be easily adapted to a Roman design.*

The imposts of the tower-arches shew the evident care of the architect to preserve the width of the church entire and unbroken. This is its chief characteristic, and must have given amazing grandeur to the area of the tower, as it does now to the choir. It was also, in all probability, most important in regard to ecclesiastical arrangements. The tower-arches, therefore, do not rest upon piers which project forward into the central aisle, but on brackets, or the capitals of short shafts not reaching to the floor of the church, and engaged in the front of the huge imposts which range with the piers of the nave and choir. This must have been almost necessary, if the choir (in a ritual sense) extended, as it does now, westward of the tower, and there are reasons for believing it did so in many, perhaps most, conventual churches. In the smaller parochial churches the intention seems to have been to mark the division as strongly as possible; in these we see rich chancel arches on imposts of great projection; and where the tower is central, both western and eastern arches have this character. Brockworth church, and the little ruined chapel of Postlip, both of them in the neighbourhood of Cheltenham, present fine specimens.

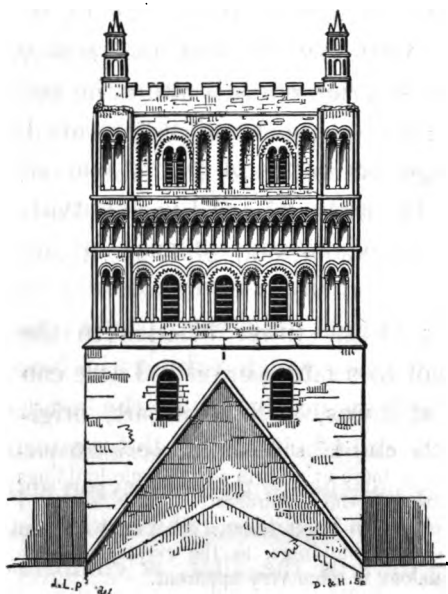
The present vaulting of the tower belongs to the fourteenth century, if not to a later period. There can be no doubt whatever that it was, at least in part, origi-

* The similarity between the classical styles and those which preceded the gothic or pointed style is more evident in romanesque buildings on the continent, than in our own Norman churches. In the former I have met with compositions which might be considered as purely Italian. But in the plainer parts of Norman buildings, as the crypts, and the inside of belfry windows, the analogy is often very apparent.

nally open as a lantern. To prove this it will be quite sufficient to exhibit elevations of the outside and of the inside. The ornament in the latter shews that it was never intended to be concealed, as at present, by any roof. In a church of such severe plainness and simplicity throughout, it cannot be supposed that what little ornament was given, would be hid. Now the lower stage of the tower, which externally presents on each face only two extremely plain round arches, pierced as



Section of Tower.



Elevation of Tower.

windows, has internally, on its lowest stage, a range of small arches on octagonal shafts, inclosing a narrow gallery, and resting on a string course which projects in such a manner as to bring the line of their bases somewhat in front of the wall below. Above are three tall plain arches, the outermost of which contain the windows, and the middle one is

blank. Under the windows is a shafted arcade engaged in the wall, and continued on the same line in the centre arch. The position of this arcade will be remarked. As the recess of the arches is of some depth, it is clear that if the arcade stood at the very bottom, immediately above the range we have already noticed, it would have been, in a great measure, invisible from beneath. But at its present elevation, at a considerable height in the wall, it might easily have been seen, and to good advantage, from the area of the church.

And here we may notice another peculiarity. The last mentioned arcade appears on the north, south, and east sides of the tower, but not on the west. The reason of this distinction may be inquired. We have already observed, that the architect seems usually to have contemplated some general exterior view of his church, and taken care that it should exhibit as much perfection as possible. The point of view might vary according to circumstances, as the command of space, the nature of the ground, or combination with external objects. But in the interior, the view looking eastward, towards the high altar, was, almost universally, that which was meant to comprehend the most perfect array of parts, and the most elaborate richness of ornament. Even externally, the idea was not lost sight of, as the richness of west fronts will testify; and internally, it will account for several peculiarities which might otherwise perplex us. In a great number of churches which exhibit the Norman chancel arch, I may say nearly all in the neighbourhood of Tewkesbury and Cheltenham, the western face of the arch is highly enriched with the chevron and other ornaments, while the eastern face, which does not meet the eye in looking towards the altar, is compara-

tively plain. This may be the reason why the eastern and two lateral walls of the lantern, which are comprehended in the view looking eastward, present an ornament which we do not find on the western wall.

On comparing the exterior of this tower with the interior, it will be observed that the plainest parts of the one correspond with the richest parts of the other; all the internal ornament being comprised within the plain basement story, while the external ornament belongs to the higher stages. This arrangement is mechanically correct, as not suffering the masonry in any part to be unduly weakened; and it is also correct in an artistic point of view, since the highest parts ought to be the richest externally, to draw the eye upwards, and give the appearance of strength below and lightness above; while in the interior, any elaborate work near the top of a very high lantern would be confused and lost. But I much doubt whether the lantern ever was open beyond the lower stage. On examination we find a clear difference between the upper and lower parts; not merely in the masonry, but in the actual material. The lower stage is faced internally with well-squared and pretty large blocks of a fine cream-coloured free-stone, very like, if not identical with, the beautiful stone of Caen, in Normandy. The upper stages are of much smaller and more irregular pieces of red sand-stone, probably quarried at no great distance from the spot. The masonry of the lower stage, both externally and internally, has rather wide joints; that of the upper, and enriched part, on the outside, is more closely jointed. The beautiful range of intersecting arches which we see between the two upper tiers of windows, is not represented internally; but there is, at the same elevation, a row of brackets,

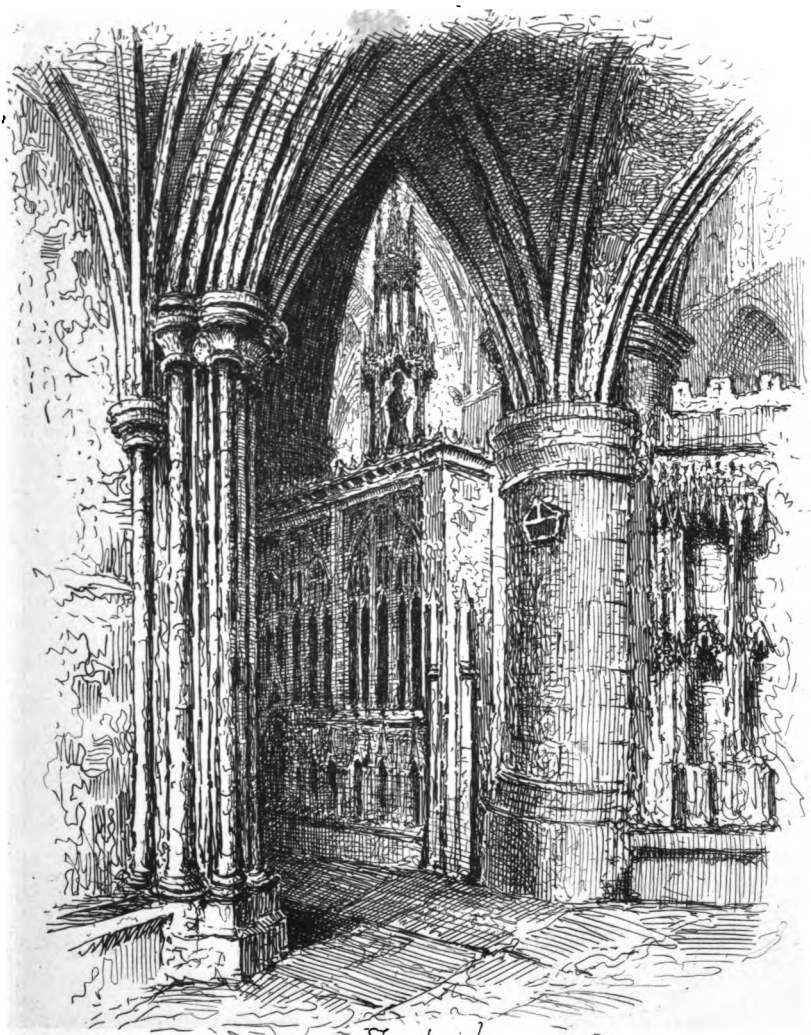
which were perhaps used in supporting the timber work of the ancient spire, and justify us in supposing this to have been Norman work. A close examination of this tower may be found to favour the conjecture which has already been thrown out, *viz.*, that it is the work of two different architects, and belongs to different periods of Norman architecture.

We may here observe that the fine tower of Pershore abbey church, which, though standing on Norman arches, is of the Decorated style, is constructed on very much the same plan. The story immediately above the tower arches has two windows on each face, set in a plain wall, externally; while the interior exhibits a most beautiful composition of panelling, perhaps unequalled in its way. the upper stage, on the contrary, is enriched externally; while the interior is quite plain, shewing merely the windows. This is, undoubtedly, of one design.

The choir of Tewkesbury church, eastward of the tower, may seem to owe all its beauty to the architects of a later age. Its finely moulded pier-arches, its large clere-story windows, glowing with the finest painted glass, the minute and intricate tracery of its vaulted roof, and an unrivalled range of monumental structures, to which the simplicity of the piers gives an effect of still greater richness, fill the eye and mind with the glories of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Yet the width and apsidal form of the old Norman plan, which is still strictly retained, perhaps give the whole a charm which the entire composition of a later period might not have afforded. There is a breadth and simplicity in the design of this choir, which we could have scarcely conceived to be consistent with the various and multiform objects which it

comprises. This we owe to the architect of the twelfth century; and his work has not been altogether obliterated. The lower part of the choir piers is, in all probability, the oldest portion of the church, as the general usage was to commence with the choir, and often to consecrate it, before any other part was completed. The bases and capitals which still remain, and are seen from the aisle, shew the Norman piers to have been much lower than the decorated ones, although these are not nearly so lofty as the piers of the nave. The portion of the original capitals which is retained, serves to support the vaulting ribs of the aisles, their roof not being of sufficient height to correspond with the pier-arches of the choir; hence a segmental arch, with a lower apex, is thrown across between the piers, behind the arches whose architraves front the choir, so as to receive the cells of the vaulting. These low piers shew that the design of the choir differed materially from that of the nave. What it was, we may infer from Gloucester cathedral, where much of the Norman choir remains, though screened with perpendicular work. In this, a large open triforium, containing a very wide passage, and vaulted over, rises above the low aisle. What may have been the clerestory range, or the roof, we cannot determine, as all the upper part was rebuilt at the end of the fourteenth century. The large triforium round the choir may have served the same purpose that it still does in many German churches, that is, as a gallery for part of the congregation.

The chapels round the choir, which we have already noticed, belong altogether to the fourteenth century. But such chapels were not uncommon during the period of Norman architecture, and appear, as we have seen, in



Tewkesbury
- S Aisle of Choir



the crypts of Gloucester. As a fine continental example we may name the abbey of Tournus, on the Saone, from the apsidal aisle of which diverge several square chapels at regular intervals.

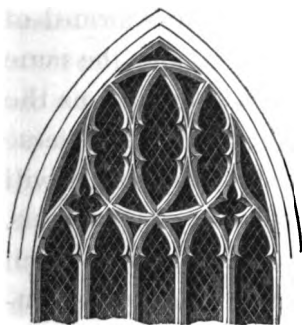
The distribution of these smaller chapels and altars seems to have exercised the skill of the mediæval architect, and evidently gave rise to great variety in composition. Where orientation was made an important object in the position of the altar, the resources of the builder are well worth study. In large continental churches an outer wall often bounds the buttresses of the aisle, thus forming a recess between each pair, open to the interior of the church; this becomes a chapel. The east side of the transept is occupied by one or more altars; the apses at Tewkesbury, Romsey, Gloucester, and in many buildings in Normandy, speak for themselves. The double intersection, which we see in Worcester cathedral, and several others, was doubtless introduced for the sake of multiplying altars. The eastern transept of Durham, which stands at the extreme end, is still known as the chapel of the nine altars. That of Lincoln has an eastern apse in each bay. The transept often has an eastern aisle, when it has no western one; this also was probably divided into chapels. At Kirkstall, the aisles of the transepts are partitioned off into recesses, six in all, each of which has a Norman piscina in its south wall. Where semi-circular or polygonal chapels branch from an apsidal aisle, it is easy to find a position for an altar with a proper orientation, that is to say, the same with the high altar itself; and this rule seems to prevail generally in England, though there may be instances to the contrary. In Germany, however, the case is different: we meet with apses which

contained altars, with almost every bearing ; at the west end, at the end of the transepts, and diverging obliquely.

On the general view of Tewkesbury church we must admit that in plan, outline, and proportions, the Norman style offers nothing incongruous with those which succeeded it. The massive central tower might, with some variation in the lines of ornament, be reproduced in either the early English, the Decorated, or the Perpendicular. The choir, the most Norman part of the building in its plan, is now in reality one of the most beautiful specimens of Decorated work in the kingdom. The turrets at the end of the nave would be supposed to belong to the later styles till a nearer view exhibits their details. The lowness of the church in proportion to its width is an individual characteristic, and not one necessarily belonging to the style. Many Norman cathedrals are of great height, as is seen when any of their fronts were finished in a style requiring height, as the east end of Ely.

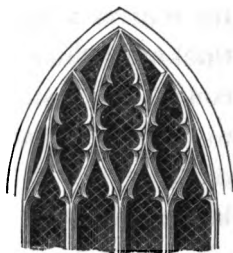
Still the succeeding styles allow a greater variety of proportion. The architects of the thirteenth century often lengthened the choir, by a very considerable addition to the Norman plan. Though low towers were not altogether discarded, (for many of the early English style are quite as massive as any Norman examples) yet higher ones were frequently used, and the outline further varied by a profusion of pinnacles and flying buttresses. The difference between the Norman and early English styles may be studied in Tewkesbury church, as the Chapter House is of the latter style; but to form a proper idea of its combinations, we must visit such churches as Salisbury, Lincoln, Ely, and Beverley, where it is advanced to the highest perfection.

The alterations made from the old Norman to the richer pointed styles, in the body of Tewkesbury church, may have been commenced in the thirteenth century, but chiefly belong to the fourteenth. Their character is pure Decorated, though part of the vaultings may belong to the Perpendicular style. The windows, though fine



Clerestory Window of Choir.

ones, have not that very free flowing tracery which prevails in some districts, as through the counties of Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire, and which must have depended on the individual skill and taste of architects; but they do not exhibit that geometrical form which marks the earlier buildings of the style. They contain some peculiarities which may belong to the period, and others which may be considered as local. Among these, the form and foliation of some tracery lights in the clerestory windows, the circle entering into the composition of the eastern window, and the tall lights of those in the apsidal chapels, are the most prominent. The glass may probably afford some indication of the date.



Clerestory Window.

Though the vaulting has broken in upon the Norman character of this church, yet the system upon which it is constructed deserves our attentive study. A roof may present a very intricate plan of tracery in the ribs which pervade it, while it is in fact a simple one in its construction; and at the same time not a single rib may have been introduced without a definite meaning. This is especially the case in the instance before us. But before

describing it, we must make a few remarks on vaulting in general, for the sake of giving the terms we use a clear explanation.

The simplest kind of vault is that which is generally called the barrel vault, and consists of a portion of a cylinder, the axis of which is a horizontal line in the direction of the length of the building; or it is formed of two cylindrical surfaces, their axes being also in the same direction, meeting in a horizontal line which forms the ridge of the roof. The section of this, by a transverse plane, at right angles with the axis of the cylinders will form, in one case, a round, in the other a pointed arch. The whole roof in fact may be considered as an arch through a wall of great thickness, that is as far as concerns its appearance from below; for its equilibrium and mechanical support require different calculations, since the roof is a mere shell, with no greater variation in thickness throughout than is necessary to secure the conditions of stability; while an arch through a wall has to sustain a large superincumbent weight. But this difference need not affect our present observations. It may be remarked also that other curves besides segments of a circle may be used in the construction of the barrel vault.

If this vault is intersected by a series of others, of the same description, which terminate in the sides of the building, the result will be a cellular vaulting; and its interior will exhibit, besides the general form of each vaulting arch, which is often marked by a transverse rib, certain oblique edges, which mark the intersections. We will distinguish the parts of this vault, as the principal vault, or that which runs longitudinally, and the cellular vault, or that which branches from it to the side of the building.

In the first place, let us suppose both of these to have for their vaulting arch, or the arch which marks the form of the barrel, equal semicircles, and to cut each other horizontally at right angles, their axes being on the same level. The oblique lines giving the intersections will, in this case, lie each in a vertical plane, cutting the walls at an angle of 45° , and will belong to an ellipse of a given form, namely, one having its major and minor axis in the proportion of the diagonal and side of a square, or $\sqrt{2} : 1$, and conversely if a vertical plane be made to cut the principal vault, this being semicylindrical, at an angle of 45° with the side wall, thus forming at its intersection a portion of an ellipse of the above description, a vault, of which this is the boundary, thrown out from the principal one to the side of the building, shall also be semicylindrical, and equal to the other in height and span. Of this kind of vaulting the abbey of Eberbach, in Germany, offers one of the best examples. The same propositions are true, if the vault is pointed instead of round, the surfaces of both vaults being segments of equal cylinders. The oblique arch will also be pointed, and consist of portions of the same kind of ellipse, as might very easily be proved.

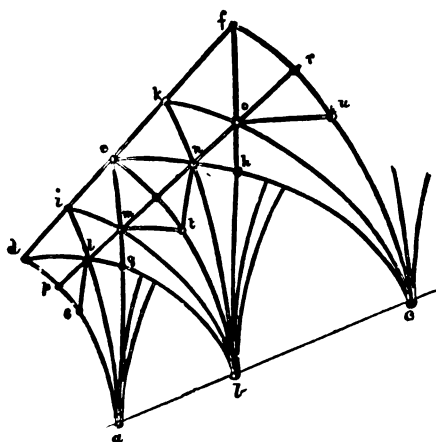
Now let the cellular vaults be smaller in span than the principal one. If these are cylindrical, either the line along the apex of the roof, or the axis of the cylinder, or both, will be on a different level from that of the principal vault, and the line of intersection will be a curve of double curvature. This is sometimes given, as when round-headed clerestory windows are let into a cylindrical roof, and it is to be found in buildings of the revived Italian. But it is more generally avoided; and, therefore, in cellular vaulting we should first consider

this oblique rib, making it a curve that shall lie entirely in a vertical plane, and construct the cell accordingly.

Supposing the principal vault to consist of cylindrical surfaces, then, if the plane in which the oblique edge or rib is to be found cuts the side walls at any other angle than one of 45° , the vaulting arch of the cell will not consist of circular, but of elliptical segments; and if the cell be of the same height with the principal vault, but of a smaller span, its vaulting arch will consist of portions of an ellipse whose axis major is vertical. From some cause or other such an arch, though very frequently used, is less agreeable to the eye than one composed of circular segments, or of elliptical, the axis major being horizontal: and it can only be avoided, either by making the vaulting arch vary at different points of the cell; or by making the principal vault elliptical, the axis minor being vertical; as is the case in the abbey of Laach, in Germany; or by making pointed cells fall into the principal vault at some level below its apex, so that the line of intersection may correspond with that of a cell equal to the principal vault, and consequently admit of a vaulting arch of circular segments. And this appears to be nearly the construction of the roof in the nave of Tewkesbury church, of which we will proceed to shew the disposition of the ribs.

Take two bays of vaulting, from the spring to the ridge of the principal vault, their boundaries being the transverse ribs $a d$, $b e$, $c f$. Draw a line in the same vertical plane from a to e , also in the same manner from b to d ; from c to e , and from b to f . The intersections of these, g and h , will be the points at which the ridges of the cells fall into the principal vault: and the lines $a g$, $g b$, $b h$, and $h c$, will be the oblique ribs

bounding the cells. Take now the points, *i* and *k*, in the

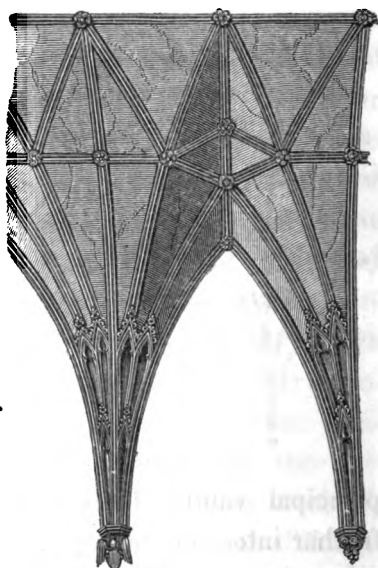


Plan of Groining.

ridge of the principal vault, corresponding with the centre of each of the bays, and draw the lines, (as before) *a i*, *i b*, *b k*, *k c*. These will give a fresh series of intersections at *l*, *m*, *n*, *g*; which will evidently lie in a straight line parallel to the ridge of the

principal vault. Draw this line, which will give the further intersections *p q r*. On the line *a d* take a point *s*, so that *p s* may be about equal to *p d*, and draw the line *s l*; and by a similar process obtain the lines *m t*, *n t*, *o u*, &c. If bosses are placed at *s*, *t*, *u*, as well as at all the other intersections, and ribs on the lines, this roof will be represented with tolerable accuracy; and by a reference to the dimensions, we shall find the conditions to be satisfied, or very nearly so, which admit of the vaulting arch of the cells being composed of circular segments. There is also a rib at the top or ridge of the cell, and one from the spring of the vault, on each side, to the ridge of the cell a little in front of the clerestory wall, against which the cell is somewhat raised, on account of the window. It will be observed that very few of these ribs can be called altogether arbitrary; they mostly mark the junction of two surfaces, or the vaulting arch itself, or the boundary lines of what would be cells of the same height with the principal vault, or the place of important intersections.

In the transepts, the cellular vaulting is varied by the introduction of oblique surfaces. The cell is connected with the principal vault, by a vaulted surface of which the ridge slopes considerably. The oblique edge, which determines the form of the vaulting arch of the cell, is cut off, and we must supply its place with an imaginary line, if we would investigate it. This is a very beautiful kind of roof, as it encloses a larger amount of space, and presents greater variety of surface, and as pleasing a disposition of lines.



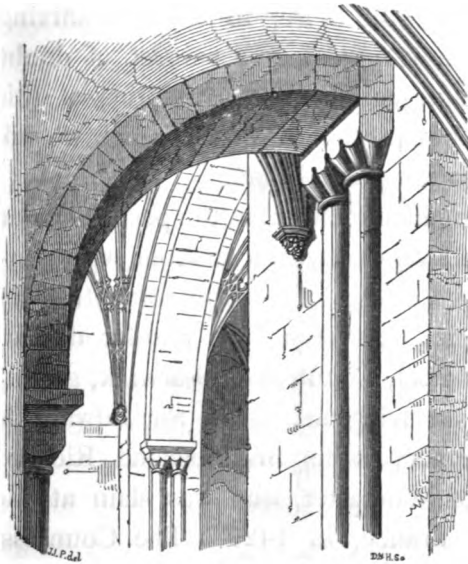
Vaulting of Transept.

The roof of the choir is an exceedingly rich specimen; much more intricate in the combinations of its ribs than that of either the nave or transepts, though perhaps even more simple in mechanical construction. Several circular patterns appear in the roof, which harmonize beautifully with the original semicircular arches of the tower, and the apsidal form of the building. The roof under the tower has also a rich combination of ribs, the pattern of which, with a little attention, it would not be difficult to trace.

The fan-vaulting, of which we find specimens in the monumental chapels or shrines, is different from the preceding. In this we must consider a flat ceiling to be supported by a series of fans, the horizontal section of which is a circle, and any vertical section through the

centre exhibits the half of an arch. These circles may either meet accurately at the top, or cross each other, or leave an intervening space; but in most cases a flat surface of the roof remains, which is generally filled with tracery, and sometimes has a pendant. The cloister of Gloucester cathedral is a well-known specimen. That of the church before us, if we can judge from its present very scanty remains, appears to have been similar.

The present vaulting of the nave aisles is of decorated date, and simple construction; but is remarkable from



Abutting Arch.

the depression of the ridge (into a curve) of the cells against the wall; those that comprise the pier-arches being horizontal, as usual. The opening between the nave-aisle and transept, which retains its Norman character, is a half arch abutting against the pier of the

tower; from which it appears probable that the original vault was semicylindrical; a form which it now appears to have externally.

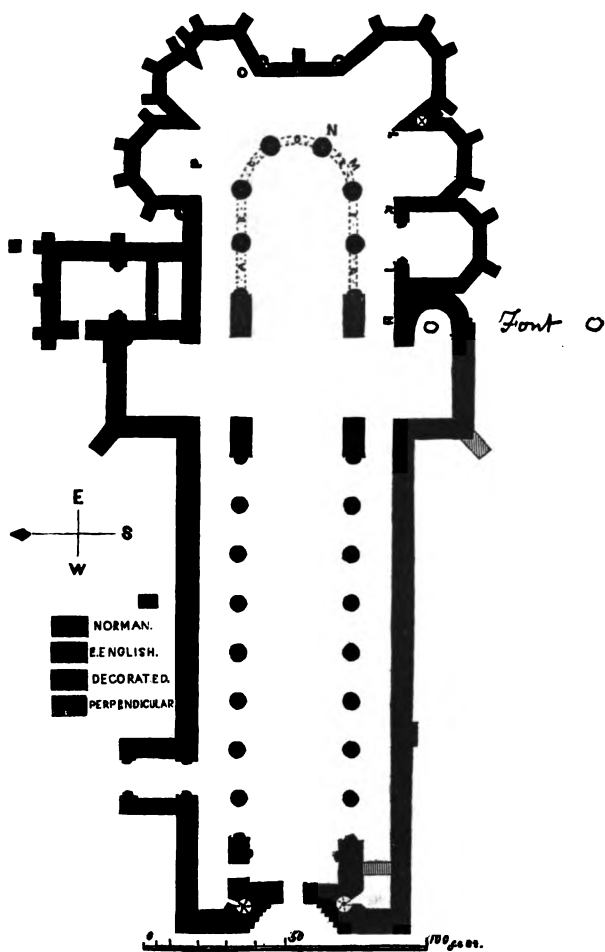
The reader, we fear, will have had reason to complain of some obscurity in the foregoing remarks. It is difficult to handle the subject of vaulting without the aid of models, as well as drawings; still it appeared too important to be wholly neglected, as we are apt to look

upon some arrangements and combinations as merely fanciful, which are in reality the result of much thought and care, and can be classified with a mathematical nicety.

The monuments in the church would require a dissertation to themselves, or, indeed, to each several one. Besides their architectural beauty, variety, and rarity, they are connected with the most stirring passages of English history: it is, however, beyond the scope of our present design to enter upon a full account of these interesting relics; and still more, to attempt affixing names or dates to such as have been a subject of doubt or discussion to the antiquary. A slight notice of this will be sufficient for our present purpose, which we will give by a reference to the ground plan.

(A).—A rich monumental chapel in the perpendicular style with two stories, vaulted with a fan-roof with pendants. The top of it consists of a series of extremely rich projecting canopies, not of a very regular design. This was erected by Isabel, Countess of Warwick, granddaughter and sole surviving heiress of Sir Edward le Despenser, to the memory of her first husband, Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Worcester, who was slain at the siege of Meaux, in France, in 1429. The Countess, who died in December, 1439, was herself interred in this chapel, which she had dedicated to St. Mary Magdalen.

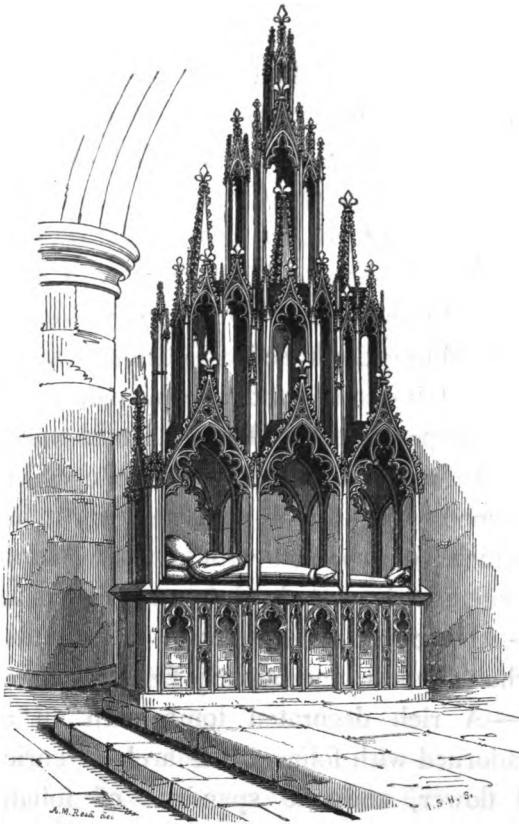
(B).—A perpendicular monumental chapel of two bays, with a fan roof. Its windows are obtusely pointed ones of five lights. It contains an altar tomb, on which has been a brass effigy of an armed figure, with a canopy: said to be the tomb of Fitzhamon the founder; erected by Abbot Parker, in 1397.



Ground Plan.



(c.)—The Despenser monument, as it is usually called. Its general character is that of late decorated, though it has some details that belong rather to the perpendicular style: it probably belongs to the end of the fourteenth century. It is an altar tomb, with the marble



effigies of a knight and a lady; and is surmounted with a very beautiful structure of open work rising to a point. The roof over the figures is a fan-vault of the simplest kind, each fan having only four ribs, corresponding with the points in which the fans touch each other, and so forming arches. It is not unlikely that, as this is among

the earliest specimens of the fan-vault, it may have suggested the more elaborate roofs of the other chapels in the same church, as well as those on a larger scale at Gloucester and in other churches.

(D).—An altar screen with some bold panelling and open-work of Decorated character, at present hidden by a modern screen.

(E).—The Sedilia. These have rich canopied arches with a double foliation, that is, each foliation of the arch has inferior foliations of its own. The remains of the ancient painting are preserved.

(F).—Monument of Sir Edward le Despenser. A fine perpendicular chapel of two bays, with windows of five lights and a fan roof. On the top is a curious open canopy, containing the kneeling figure of a knight. This chapel also retains some of its ancient painting.

(G).—An open screen of Perpendicular work.

(H).—An arched tomb with a low-pitched crocketed gable crowned with a finial, and flanked by heavy pinnacles, which are panelled with a plain pointed arch. This is evidently decorated, of an early date.

(I).—An arched tomb also with a low gable, much plainer than the last, and of early English character.

(K).—A rich decorated tomb with an arch and canopy adorned with foliage; the arch is enriched with the ball flower, and the spandrils of foliation with sculpture.

(L).—An altar tomb under a depressed arch; assigned to Abbot Cheltenham.

(M).—A Purbeck marble tomb, under a segmental round arch, enriched with foliage, apparently of a later date. On the tomb is an inscription.

“Johannes Abbas hujus loci.”

(N).—A Decorated tomb.

(O).—A Perpendicular monument with a low-pitched open arch, and some rich open work. It contains a figure in an emaciated state, with reptiles crawling over it. It is said to have been erected by Abbot Wakeman.

(P).—A beautiful monument, somewhat similar in composition to the Dispenser monument; containing the effigy of a knight. It is erected to the memory of Sir Guy O'Brien, third husband to Elizabeth de Montacute, daughter of the Earl of Salisbury. It is of early Perpendicular character. The roof above the figure is a curious one from the vaulting arch, both in the principal vault and lateral cells, being trefoiled, which gives the appearance of great intricacy to the design.

In the north aisle, westward of the transept, is a tomb under an arch in the wall, which has been supposed to be that of Lord Wenlock, killed in the battle of Tewkesbury; and in a similar position in the opposite aisle is a tomb said to have been erected to the memory of Edmund Beaufort, Duke of Somerset, who was beheaded after the battle of Tewkesbury. Neither of these two last monuments, however, seem to have been appropriated on any sufficient authority.

All these beautiful specimens of monumental architecture, any one of which would repay many hours of careful and attentive study, are more fully described in the Tewkesbury Guide; abridged from the History of Tewkesbury, published in 1830, and printed for the use of strangers visiting the Abbey Church. The font is octagonal, with a shafted stem of Decorated character, though the base mouldings have some early English features. It stands at present in the apse of the south transept.

A friend, who has lately published a most interesting and instructive work on the subject of glass painting,* has kindly allowed us the use of the notes which he made during a hurried visit to Tewkesbury and Gloucester.

“ With regard to the glass of Tewkesbury, I still consider it to be one of the very finest specimens of early Decorated work. I say *early*, because my own opinion is—judging from its character—that it is of the early part of the second quarter of the fourteenth century. I am aware that Mr. Shaw, who in his “ *Dresses and Decorations*,” has engraved one of the figures of the Clares, has assigned to this figure a date about 1340. As I have had no opportunity yet of testing Mr. Shaw’s accuracy, and therefore cannot presume to contradict him, I yet, as at present advised, cannot but retain my original opinion. The style of the costume and armour is certainly of the time of Edward the Second. The last of the male representatives of the Clares was slain in 1313, when the earldom became extinct; all of which agrees with the date indicated by the character of the glass; if we suppose that the glass was erected as a memorial of the extinct family, some ten years after the death of the last Earl, by perhaps female coheireses, as, I believe, was not an unusual practice. Some day, I hope, I may become better acquainted with this glass, by drawing parts of it and taking notes of the shields of arms in the panels beneath the figures and canopies. Though I much fear the latter will throw but little light on the subject.

“ The arrangement of the glass in these windows is

* *Hints on Glass Painting*, by an Amateur. 2 vols., 8vo.—*Parker, Oxford*, 1847.

very good; the design being calculated to produce a good effect at a distance. The original design of the east window (in the tracery of which is one of the most beautiful star-like wheels that I have ever seen, of which the effect entirely depends on the skilful arrangement of its colouring, and the texture of the glass of which it is composed) is—a figure and canopy in each lower light,—a panel containing a small picture in colours beneath each canopy, and below this a panel containing a shield of arms. The arrangement of each of the other windows consists, or rather did consist, of a figure and canopy in each lower light, with only a panel containing a coat of arms beneath; by which means the figures in the east window are made to range, by the space of an interval between two saddle-bars higher than those in the side windows. A greater degree of dignity is thus given to the figures in the east window, befitting the greater importance of the subjects, and at the same time a pyramidal principle is introduced into the whole design. The wonderful effect of this glass, which looks like a mass of diamonds, rubies, and emeralds, is almost entirely caused by the nature and texture of the material itself. It is but little assisted by the arrangement of the colouring. Were the Tewkesbury windows to be most accurately copied now in modern glass, the copy would have none of the effect of the original, because it would be executed in a very different sort of material. Identity of design will not ensure identity of effect, without identity of material also: a fact which cannot be too often repeated.

“ Since the Tewkesbury glass is that which cannot be reproduced, I trust a sense of its intrinsic value will for ever save it from what is mildly termed restoration. The

value of this glass does not consist in its mere *prettiness*, but in being an evidence of ancient art. Therefore I had rather see it repaired, as need may require, by a country glazier, even though he should use outrageously broad lead work, or even transpose, or invert some of the figures, than to see it come fresh from the workshop of a professed restorer. For the chances are that a common country glazier would leave some traces behind him, (in the shape of original leadwork or otherwise) indicating the original construction and arrangement of the glass. He is, therefore, a better friend to truth, to antiquaries and artists, than your modern restorer, who sweeps away all these little but invaluable evidences by a general releading; and throws the work into such confusion that it is impossible ever after to rectify the blunders he is almost sure to commit in rearranging it. The restorations of painted glass we saw at York last year, and at Winchester the year before, are enough to make one shudder when a restoration is even hinted at. I have nothing to say about restorations of ancient stonework; that is out of my province quite; but I must say I think it is as ridiculous to talk about restoring ancient glass, as it would be to talk about restoring an ancient manuscript. The value of these ancient records is in proportion to their originality; to their not having been tampered with. At all events the time has not yet arrived for restorations to be made with safety.

“The choir windows of Gloucester cathedral are fine specimens of late Decorated work. The east window is, perhaps, on the whole, the finest in England. Being a figure and canopy window, its design is well calculated to produce, by the simplicity and size of its parts, a

good effect at a distance. The abrupt termination of the colouring at the top of the window, no doubt was not so striking as it is now, when the glass in the clerestory windows was perfect. Judging from the fragments which exist in the clerestory windows on the north side of the choir, it appears that the original design of these windows was a row of figures and canopies in the lower tier of lights; all the rest of the window above the transom being filled with ornamental patterns, chiefly composed like that in the head of the east window, of white glass. Thus the lower part of the side window would appear like a mass of colouring, which would be terminated abruptly by the transom, and thus would harmonize with the abrupt termination of colour in the east window. I imagine the colouring was not carried over these windows, for fear of making the place too dark. I have no doubt at all that the glass in the east window was originally designed for the window, not the window for the glass. That the glass is clearly Decorated there can be no doubt, though it certainly has some late features.

“ Thus a knowledge of the date of the glass seems to indicate the date of the window, and to prove that the introduction of Perpendicular features in stonework, is, perhaps, earlier than was at one time supposed.”

The above remarks on the restoration of glass, are, we think, applicable also, though with some modification, to repairs of stonework. It is true that a ruinous effect in the interior, or indeed in any part of a church, is painful to our religious feelings. An old church is not merely to be looked upon as a record of past ages, but as a valuable bequest for the use of the present; and therefore such restorations as are necessary to ensure

stability, or propriety of appearance, must be fearlessly undertaken. We should remember, nevertheless, that specimens of a good period of art, even though somewhat mutilated, may be of greater value in themselves, and give greater dignity and solemnity to the edifice, than even the best modern restorations. The vestiges of antiquity are marks of durability. They are additions, doubtless, not unforeseen by the architect, to the impressiveness of the design, and they assist it in drawing the mind from outward objects. The touch of a modern chisel may easily dispel, or at least weaken, the charm; and more especially if we are ignorant of the rules which guided the hand of the original artist. If we look carefully at old mouldings, they will often present some indescribable curve, perhaps drawn freely by the hand; for which the restorer substitutes one marked out by compasses. How seldom does a modern pinnacle, or embattled parapet, give the spirit and character of an ancient one. Till we can work as the mediæval artists did, surely we ought to attempt none but necessary restorations: and if we admit this rule as regards minor details, much more should we observe it when the whole appearance of a building is affected. It were barbarous to alter the character of an ancient church, simply because we cannot understand its beauties: and if we fancy we can improve even one of the simplest and most unpretending structures of our ancestors, we may find, when it is too late, that they have no less accurately studied excellence of design and beauty of proportion in these, than in their richest cathedrals.

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